

Once upon a time, well within the memory of Utah graybeards, the town of Heber — or Heber City as it now is called — could boast one of the finest "village greens" in the state or region. In those days, as one guidebook put it, the town was the "trading center of a large ranching area in the center of a green valley, encircled by pasture, hayfields, and forested mountains." Heber's Main Street district centered around its park-like, block square swatch of communal greensward. This pleasant, tree-shaded area then sheltered a pair of very handsome structures, the 1887 Wasatch Stake Tabernacle and the equally picturesque and elderly Wasatch County Courthouse. Side-by-side, these homespun buildings imparted an air reminiscent of far older towns still to be found in upper New York State, Pennsylvania, New England or Ohio. Architecturally this was not surprising — after all, most Mormon pioneers came from those eastern states. When Utah's early settlers prospered, they often erected buildings reminiscent of their ancestral burgs.

Next time you set forth on a junket in search of bright autumn leaves, or seek a mid-day Midway repast at the Homestead, or want to view the mammoth construction work now under way at the \$400 million Jordanelle Dam project on U.S. Highway 40, take time off to view the present state of affairs at the aforementioned "village green" in Mid-Heber.

Alas, the County Courthouse, deemed inefficient by Wasatch County commissioners in 1965 or thereabouts, has long since vanished. It was replaced, in 1967-68, by a squat, ugly (but doubtless efficient) new building designed by Young & Fowler. Messrs. Lorenzo Young and Robert Fowler may — or may not — have approved of the destruction of the historic "has-been," but the one-story brick-plus-basement structure they blueprinted as its replacement is about as appealing as your average insurance company building or minimal medical/dental center.

To better appreciate the fact that "modern" is not necessarily the equal of old, turn your eyes away from the efficient 1967 horror, and



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enjoy the very pleasant sight of the still sturdy, still slightly brick and sandstone Wasatch Stake Tabernacle. Surprisingly, it now houses city services rather than Sunday services. Begun in 1887, but not completed until a few years afterwards, the well-proportioned building, tower and all, was designed by an unknown architect. According to the Utah State Historical Society, construction was "supervised by Abram Hatch."

The tabernacle's interior was remodeled in 1930-31, but if you walk down its newly laid sandstone front walk today, you'll find nary a sign of the churchly interior long familiar to generations of Heber Valley's Latter-day Saints. The structure has been gutted, and its chapel, altar and rows of long wooden benches worn by countless young, old and middle-aged worshipers, have vanished with the village elders.

However, the tabernacle's new interior is airy, well lighted and enhanced by the pale blue and white paint job on walls, partitions and stairwells. Consequently, Nora Jones, at work in the City Treasurer's office, has a far more pleasant view from her desk than does Freda Zufelt, the "information gal" in that uninviting Wasatch County office building just across the lawn. By the by, Zufelt was once quartered in a very different building, a railroad caboose that stood between the tabernacle and the 1967 county building.

Out back of the tabernacle-turned-City Hall, the old LDS Social Hall is now a busy Senior Citizen's Center. And, as another reminder of bygone days, Daughters of Utah Pioneers artifacts are on display in the hallway of the one-time tabernacle. In contrast, a hallway notice to Heber citizens reminds them that the city coun-

cil meets in these no longer sacred precincts, with topics of the day including an anti-littering ordinance, approval of plumbing regulations, a discussion concerning the city water tank, and an analysis of traffic problems at 400 South and 200 West. There's one further reminder of days long gone. Not far from the police dispatcher's desk a painting by Vernon Murdock, presented to the city by the Heber Light & Power Co., shows 1910 horses and buggies hitched to the rail outside the Wasatch Stake Tabernacle. The building remains an outward mirror-image of the 1910 view, except for the row of police cars occupying the parking lot.

To the naked and unknowing eye, several Main Street structures near the 1887 tabernacle might not outlast this century. Allen's Shoe Repair shop at 135 S. Main seems viable as an old shoe, but Clyde's Billiards and Beer parlor and Mr. B's Pizzeria are both shuttered. A Pontiac sales emporium across the way has vanished — replaced (sign of the times) by the Timpanogos Trading Post, which boasts a colorful teepee. Editors at the *Wasatch Wave* and city planner Robert Mathis doubtless insist there's no thought of giving the place back to the Indians. Indeed, dam and highway construction on the Jordanelle project, the puffing locomotives of the Heber Creeper, expansion of the Wasatch State Park golf course, and a new executive-size golf course at the Homestead are seen as signaling an upturn sure to bring new-life to everyone's favorite town.

ADDENDA: You can't save them all, of course, nor should we. Heber City and the Utah State Historical Society took the Wasatch Stake Tabernacle under their collective wing in 1975 to protect the integrity of (at the least) the exterior of the fine old building. And, for these past ever-so-many years, Salt Lake City has been funding restoration of its City-County Building (the county, of course, has pulled out). Now, with the landscaping work under way, the expensive effort is showing signs of paying off, visually.

However, the big iron ball will soon be swinging, if it hasn't started thudding already, at the Lincoln Ju-